

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA  
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – May 10, 2025  
at The Lamb Center, Fairfax, VA**

*The Lamb Center, Fairfax, Virginia is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway and Manahoac peoples. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.*

**Present:**

Bishop Leila Ortiz, Bishop  
Jennifer Slagle Peck, Vice President  
Barbara Bilodeau, Secretary  
Julie Hamre, Treasurer  
Rachad Ya Ntima Esengo, Maryland – Lay  
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered  
Anita Smallin, Montgomery - Lay  
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery – Rostered  
Patrick Anderson, Potomac – Lay  
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered  
Don Wallace, Virginia - Lay  
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia – Rostered  
Edyn Wheeler, At-Large Young Adult (Appointed at this meeting)  
Nolan G, At-Large Youth

**Absent:**

Sheena Foster, DC – Lay  
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered  
Breeze Lawless, Fairfax - Lay  
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax - Rostered

**Synod Staff:**

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey  
Pr. Jason Shank  
Katharyn Wheeler

**Guests: n/a**

**Vacancies:** None.

**Call to Order** Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:03am. The secretary verified the attendance.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted:** **SC25.05.20** To appoint Edyn Wheeler to the vacant Council position of At-Large Young Adult.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC25.05.21** To approve the agenda for the May 10, 2025, Synod Council meeting; to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2025 Synod Council Meeting; and to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2025 Synod Council Electronic Vote.

## **Reports and Other Matters**

### **1. Council**

- a. Business?

### **2. Staff and Officer Reports**

- a. Bishop Ortiz
  - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC25.05.22** the following change in status:
    - That Rev. Troy Jacobson be placed to the On Leave from Call roster effective April 30, 2025.
    - That the Rev. Emmanuel Grantson be placed on the retired roster effective September 1, 2025

**At this time, Deacon Dave Larrabee, Pastoral Director of The Lamb Center, was able to join us and led our Devotions.**

- ii. The Bishop's report continued: Events, activities, and other updates – seen in written report
- iii. Bishop Ortiz described the recent trip to El Salvador upon the tragic death of their Bishop and the transition. She attended to “name the pain” and engage with the colleagues about deportations, but the domestic situation was dense with pain; locals frequently asked for people to continue to visit them; noted that the country is significantly safer than previously but also the poor are poorer.
- iv. Bishop Ortiz requested that the Council consider allocating \$15-25K to support any legal costs incurred by pastors in response to political action, noting pastors are at risk from protests. The sense of the Council was favorable. A team of Pastors Stall, Randolph, and Langknecht volunteered to form the motion and the parameters of who and how decisions are made for disbursement; to be reviewed at the Executive Committee and presented at the next Council Meeting.
- b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
  - i. Financial reports: 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report shows we should have received about 25% mission support and we at 20%. Have spent 53% of travel budget which included the recent El Salvador trip. We have spent \$105k from the designated funds which is in accordance with the plan.
  - ii. The Synod received a bequest from Duane Straub. Have received \$10k of what will be a total of \$28k. There is no designation from the estate on how the funds should be used. The council gives thanks for this generous gift.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey
  - i. The ordination of Emily Demarco is this afternoon. She is the first Minister of Worship and Service shared between two congregations that we have had in a long time (if ever).
  - ii. Providing candidates to congregations in transition is more challenging since November: formerly received 5-6 profiles per month, but now are receiving 1-3; we can't give congregations candidates we don't have.

- iii. Described the Fund for Leaders from ELCA to support an internship program that would help us place interns in congregations that cannot afford the full cost of an intern on their own.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Jason Shank
  - iv. The Bold and Boundless appeal has raised just under \$60k. The Appeal will continue through the Synod Assembly.
  - i. Holy Closure Updates:
    - Good Samaritan, Lexington Park, MD: Announced that closure service is on Pentecost (June 8, 2025). Yesterday (5/9) the Trustees signed an agreement selling the property for \$1.8M, to close within 120 days. The realtor has worked with the buyer in the past, and believes the deal will not fall through.
    - Holy Comforter, DC: Trustees are meeting this Wednesday. They are preparing the paperwork showing the congregation is under synod administration and will bring a locksmith to get access to the building.
  - v. Grant requests for camps. Received requests from both Mar-Lu-Ridge and Caroline Furnace camps. The table is supportive of the requests, but didn't feel they had authorization to approve, as their mission was related to congregations and this was for camps. The table referred the requests to the Council for action. Treasurer Hamre suggested that funds could come from the Faith Fund. Discussion involved the prior funds provided to camps, the on-going budget allocations for camps, and the status of current income. Bishop Ortiz and Pastor Shank suggested that the council pause the action for the next administration. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted** (with one opposed and one abstention): **SC25.05.23** to table the consideration of the grant requests from Mar-Lu-Ridge and Caroline Furnace until the September meeting.
  - vi. Letter from Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Washington DC: The church voted in January for Dissolution of Relationship with the ELCA. Synod staff feel that the Synod has tried everything possible to engage in positive ways, but the congregation has not been responsive. The congregation has had several mis-steps in this process, the Synod was not represented at the congregation meeting where the vote took place, nor was there sufficient notice (per the Constitution) given to the congregation. It is now for the Council to choose how to respond, whether to accept the congregation's decision, and how to address the property. Noted that there may be liability issues on the congregation related to the building, preschool, and taxes. The sense of the Council was that we want to have the sequence of events and contacts documented with the motion and showing the advice from the Synod Attorney. The staff will draft a memorandum outlining efforts to engage with the congregation. VP Slagle Peck will draft a motion, to include attachments of the history and a letter to the congregation, for action at the June meeting.
  - vii. Personnel update: Pastor Shank expects to accept a position on the staff of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, working in church planning & redevelopment. He has negotiated to stay until June 8, and is currently handing off the work he's doing. May be announcing it this week.
- e. Youth Organization Report, Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, Metro D.C. Synod Youth+Family Coordinator – see written report.
  - i. Youth events have been going very well. We are seeing youth respond to the Play and Pray events and bring friends.
- f. Secretary's Report, Barbara Bilodeau

- i. Reviews/approvals of congregation constitution updates – none.
- g. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
  - i.
  - ii. Our next meeting is in June at the Synod Assembly.
  - iii. There will be a Council transition meeting on July 19 for all new members and all officers outgoing and incoming. Will assess in June whether it is zoom or in person. This meeting will typically confirm the council commitments document; the Council is asked to consider what should be modified.
- h. Assembly Planning Chair, Pr. Alex Stall
  - i. There are currently 325 registrations. We are beyond capacity for hotel rooms; will have some outside rooms reserved. Currently working on the Assembly scripts. The transition team expects to need some funds; they will present a budget. We have some requests for interpretation. There was a glitch and not all resolutions that were submitted were received; we are examining the date to see when they were sent and what needs to be tabled for next year, otherwise they may be presented to the Council. There are two Spend Plan workshops coming up and then one on the voting process, both are by zoom. The voting process will be repeated in person on Friday morning of the Assembly at 9am.

**3. Committees, Tables, and Teams - Reports as needed**

- a. n/a

**4. New Business –** Add to calendars: celebration of Bishop Ortiz's term, dinner on Aug 9, 6pm, in College Park and Farewell Service on Aug 10, 4pm, at UMD.

**5. Sharing good news:** Council members shared recent good news events in their lives.

**The meeting adjourned** at 11:41am with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Friday June 6, 2025, 8:30am, at Synod Assembly, College Park, MD

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara A. Bilodeau  
Secretary